

start of the summer season, but for the men and women who have served in our Armed Forces, and in doing so gave their lives, we owe them our remembrance and demonstrated appreciation.

It is my sincere hope that you will pause this Memorial Day in remembrance of our fallen soldiers, whose courage and bravery sustain our liberty.

HONORING JASON KORTZ

(Mr. COFFMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, Memorial Day is a day to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our Nation. I can think of no better time to remember one of those brave, young men who made the ultimate sacrifice as he trained to protect the values that we as a nation hold so dear.

An elite member of the Naval Special Warfare Group 1, Special Warfare Operator 3rd Class Jason Kortz distinguished himself consistently throughout his life and during his short military career.

Hailing from Highlands Ranch, Colorado, he graduated from the University of Denver. Most recently, Jason set himself apart when he was selected as the honor man of his basic underwater demolition SEAL class.

Tragically, this true patriot and consummate professional gave his life in defense of our Nation when he died during a training accident on March 18, 2015.

On this Memorial Day, please join me and the family of Jason Kortz to pause and reflect on the ultimate sacrifices that warriors like Jason have made to uphold all that we value as a nation.

□ 1315

ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, May is Asthma Awareness Month. As co-chair of the Congressional Asthma and Allergy Caucus and a senior member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's Health Subcommittee, I want to take this opportunity to bring attention to the prevalence of asthma in the United States, as well as what must be done to control its growth.

Asthma is one of the most serious chronic diseases in the country. It affects almost 26 million Americans and nearly 7 million children. It can cause shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, chest pain, and even death.

In my home State of New York, asthma takes a particularly heavy toll, especially in my home county of the Bronx. About 390,000 children and 1.4 million adults in New York have asthma.

The total cost of asthma-related hospitalizations in New York in 2007 was a staggering \$535 million.

I have been a strong supporter of the Centers for Disease Control's National Asthma Control Program, which helps States implement systems to monitor and treat asthma. This program's work has resulted in \$23.1 billion in asthma healthcare costs since 2001.

We must continue to increase awareness and preventative measures to help people manage their disease. We must work collaboratively across sectors to address the burden that asthma creates.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in a bipartisan fashion to ensure that adults and children across the United States can live healthier and more successful lives and that we can conquer the scourge of asthma.

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL R. MARTIN UMBARGER

(Mr. ROKITA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished Hoosier and American, Major General R. Martin Umbarger, the Adjutant General of Indiana, who is retiring after 11 years as the leader of the Indiana Guard Reserve and the Indiana Army and Air National Guard.

Major General Umbarger's distinguished career in the military spans five decades and began when he enlisted as a soldier in the Indiana Army National Guard in 1969.

As secretary of state, I had the privilege of working with Major General Umbarger to protect Hoosiers serving in the military, both out of State and overseas, by promoting and improving absentee voting processes.

As Indiana's Fourth District Representative, I have also worked with Major General Umbarger on legislation which would study the structure of our military and how Reserve components can be best utilized.

In short, Major General Umbarger is one of the most accomplished adjutant generals in the country and a valuable leader in Indiana and the USA. He has led our National Guard and served our State and Nation with integrity and distinction over his 45-year military career.

I would like to thank Major General Umbarger for his selfless service and wish him well in his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO JOE GALUSKI

(Mr. KATKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Joe Galuski, a beloved central New York broadcaster who spent more than 25 years on air on WSYR radio.

Known for his ability to discuss with knowledge any topic presented to him, Joe faithfully kept our community updated on the latest local stories and provided us with news from around the Nation.

A legend in central New York radio, Joe Galuski is fondly recognized by the thousands of listeners who tuned in religiously on morning commutes and to hear him on SU football's pre- and postgame talk shows.

Joe was more than a radio host; he had the power to communicate and entertain and became a large part of the lives of many of his listeners. He was a gracious and tough interviewer who was quick with a joke. His personality, sense of humor, and intelligence could always be heard in his voice.

Joe Galuski was loved by central New York, a community he cared deeply about. His spirit as the voice of our community will not be forgotten by his family, friends, colleagues, and listeners.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM THOMAS KIRCHHOFF, JR.

(Mr. PERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, today, I pay homage to the legacy of a man who not only resided in Pennsylvania's Fourth Congressional District, but much more importantly, a man who served the Commonwealth and our Nation with pride, as an exemplary businessman, phenomenal athlete, and true patriot.

William Thomas Kirchhoff, Jr., was a standout quarterback for Lafayette College, eventually being inducted into their hall of fame. After college, Tom continued on to the NFL, being signed by the Philadelphia Eagles.

While he is known in Pennsylvania as a great athlete, Tom is known by his family and community as a great man. His fierce quest to live a full life and raise a happy family, despite his struggle with ALS, is beyond inspirational. In fact, his attitude and drive should inspire every citizen to live fully, completely, and with a purpose, despite the challenges that may confront them.

Tom physically may have left us on March 10, 2015, but his soul, spirit, and legacy will endure. To his devoted wife, Staci, and their four children—Tommy, Sam, Brynley, and Ty—on behalf of the Commonwealth and the Nation, thank you. Thank you for sharing Tom's all too short but extremely meaningful life with us.

I am truly honored and humbled to be even a small part of the recognition of a truly great American.

Tom, we wish you Godspeed.

CONSTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION AND CHOICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of

the bill (H.R. 2496) to extend the authorization for the replacement of the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, to make certain improvements in the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN)?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Reserving the right to object, I do not object, but I do want to thank my colleague from Colorado concerning what will be a short time to continue negotiations to finish our hospital in the Denver area.

As we come into this Memorial Day weekend, veterans in the Rocky Mountain West have waited 15 years for this hospital to be built. Substantial construction has taken place. Any further delay just delays delivering good services—great services—to our veterans.

We need to continue to move this along. The fact that we are moving beyond Memorial Day, keeping this project going forward, without mothballing it, is a step in the right direction; but, Mr. Speaker, I ask the majority and the Republican leadership to work with the VA to get this finished, so that we can provide the best medical care possible, similar to what Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS was talking about at her hospital in Washington. We want that same thing in Denver, Colorado.

We need to finish this hospital as soon as possible.

I withdraw my reservation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman withdraws his reservation.

Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN)?

There was no objection.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2496

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Construction Authorization and Choice Improvement Act”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the replacement of the existing Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, in fiscal year 2015, in an amount not to exceed \$900,000,000.

(b) LIMITATION ON OBLIGATION OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding section 8104(c) of title 38, United States Code, or any other provision of law, funds may not be obligated or expended for the project described in subsection (a) in an amount that would cause the total amount obligated for that project to exceed the amount specified in the law for that project (or would add to total obligations exceeding such specified amount).

SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF DISTANCE REQUIREMENT FOR EXPANDED AVAILABILITY OF HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES FOR VETERANS THROUGH THE USE OF AGREEMENTS WITH NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ENTITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 101(b)(2) of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146; 38 U.S.C. 1701 note) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “(as calculated based on distance traveled)” after “40 miles”; and

(2) in subparagraph (D)(ii), by striking subclause (II), and inserting the following new subclause (II):

“(II) faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to such a medical facility of the Department based on—

“(aa) geographical challenges;

“(bb) environmental factors, such as roads that are not accessible to the general public, traffic, or hazardous weather;

“(cc) a medical condition that impacts the ability to travel; or

“(dd) other factors, as determined by the Secretary.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and apply with respect to care or services provided on or after such date.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

BENGHAZI ATTACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, nearly 3 years, on September 11 and 12, 2012, the United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya, were the target of terrorist attacks. These attacks resulted in the deaths of four Americans: Sean Smith; Tyrone Woods; Glen Doherty; and the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, as well as two other Americans critically injured.

It comes at a time close to Memorial Day, when this country can honor these individuals that gave their life and their service not just for this country, but for the freedom and democracy around the world of others.

The gravity of the attacks raise serious questions regarding the U.S. presence in Benghazi, Libya, particularly as those questions related to the policies, decisions, and activities of the administration and relevant executive branch agencies before, during, and after the attacks.

For nearly 2 years, Congress sought answers to these questions. However,

the administration's valid response has exposed the limits encountered by our standing committees.

□ 1330

These responses revealed a less than competent or transparent accounting about the attacks. Consequently, the House created, with the support of our Democratic colleagues, the Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi, Libya.

Everywhere I go, Mr. Speaker, I have people ask me: What is taking so long? What is taking so long for us to get the facts about what happened in Benghazi?

We are going to do our best today to explain to the American people and to the public and to you, Mr. Speaker, why it has taken so long, why it is requiring us to continue to subpoena and beg and plead for the information that we need to be able to deliver this report to this body and to the American people.

The Speaker appointed me and six of my Republican colleagues to this committee. The minority leader appointed five of our Democratic colleagues. We have been directed by the House to conduct a complete investigation across the spectrum of all, A-L-L, all relevant executive branch agencies and issue a definitive final report on the events surrounding the September 11-12, 2012, terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya.

Specifically, we are directed to investigate and report on: all policies, decisions, and activities that contributed to the attacks on United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11 and 12, 2012, as well as those that affected the ability of the United States to prepare for those attacks; number two, all policies, decisions, and activities to respond to and repel the attacks on United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11 and 12, 2012, including efforts to rescue United States personnel; number three, internal and public executive branch communications about the attacks on the United States facility in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11 and 12, 2012; number four, accountability for policies and decisions relating to the security of facilities in Benghazi, Libya, and the response to the attacks, including individuals and entities responsible for those policies and decisions; number five, executive branch authorities' efforts to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of these attacks on the U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, September 11 and 12, 2012; number six, executive branch activities and efforts to comply with congressional inquiries into the attacks on the United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11 and 12, 2012; recommendations for improving executive branch cooperation and compliance with congressional oversight investigations; information related to lessons learned from the attacks and executive branch